

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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R 101415Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7493

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB UNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BELGRADE 4563

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS YO

SUBJECT: FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER LUKIC RETRIED

REF: BELGRADE 1868

1. FORMER FEDERAL INTERIOR SECRETARY VOJIN LUKIC WAS PLACE ON TRIAL AGAIN LAST WEEK IN BELGRADE, CHARGED WITH SPREADING HOSTILE PROPAGANDA DURING PERIOD FROM 1968 UNTIL DECEMBER 1972. BORBA REPORTED OCTOBER 7 THAT HE WAS CONVICTED AND SENTENCED TO 30 MONTHS HARD LABOR. COURT REMANDED HIM INTO CUSTODY UNTIL CONVICTION AND SENTENCED ARE CONFIRMED BY HIGHER COURT.

2. PRESIDING JUDGE, IN EXPLAINING SENTENCE, STATE THAT ALL CHARGES HAD BEEN PROVEN AND TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES REMAINED CONSISTENT (WITH THAT IN EARLIER TRIAL), PROVING THAT LUKIC CARRIED ON HOSTILE PROPAGANDA FOR LONG PERIOD. LUKIC'S CONVICTION ENCOMPASSED FOLLOWING SPECIFIC ACTS: FALSELY REPRESENTING COSICAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEM OF YUGOSLAVIA; MAKING INSULTING REMARKS ABOUT (UNNAMED) TOP-RANKING OFFICIALS: MAKING OFFENSIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT YUGOSLAV NATIONAL GROUPS: AND OTHER (UNREPORTED) ACTS.

3. LUKIC WAS OUSTED WITH RANKOVIC IN 1966. HE WAS CONVICTED
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ON SAME INDICTMENT AND GIVEN 18 MONTHS IMPRISONMENT AT HARD

LABOR IN APRIL 1973. HE APPEALED AND CONVICTION WAS SUBSEQUENTLY OVERTURNED ON UNSPECIFIED DATE BY SERBIAN SUPERIOR COURT, WHICH FOUND THAT "CERTAIN FACTS WERE INCORRECTLY AND IMCOMPLETELY ESTABLISHED". LUKIC WAS FREED PENDING RETRIAL.

4. COMMENT: LUKIC'S CRIME APPEARS TO BE LITTLE MORE THAN ENGAGING IN KAFANA (COFFEE-HOUSE) GOSSIP. ONE REPORT GOING AROUND HAD LUKIC MAKING STATEMENTS, SIMILAR TO THOSE CITED BY RESIDING JUDGE, TO WORKERS IN KAFANAS. REPORT SQUARES WITH ACCOUNT TO TRIAL, WHICH SAID MAIN PROSECUTION WITNESS WAS WORKER FROM DUBROVNIK. HIS RHETORIC MAY WELL HAVE EXCEEDED GOOD SENSE WHEN HE MADE OFFENSIVE REMARKS ABOUT HIGH-RANKING YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS AND NATIONALITIES. SUCH LACK OF CAUTION PROBABLY ACCOUNTS FOR RETRIAL AND STIFFER SENTENCE. IN APRIL ANNOUNCEMENT OF LUKIC'S FIRST CONVICTION MENTIONED ONLY HOSTILE PROPAGANDA WHILE COURT JUSTIFIED LATEST DECISION WITH LIST OF SPECIFIC ACTS, INCLUDING INSULTS TO OFFICIALS AND NATIONALITIES. THRUST OF SUPREME COURT ORDER FOR RETRIAL, REPORTED IN BORBA OCTOBER 4, WAS MORE ON SIDE OF CALL FOR FIRMER CONDEMNATION THAN EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FOR DEFENDANT'S RIGHTS OR CORRECTNESS OF JUDICIAL PROCEDURE.

TOON

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